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NEWS RELEASE

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R.I. receives \$4-million federal grant for new student-data system System to encompass data from prekindergarten through workforce

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded Rhode Island a \$4-million grant to develop a comprehensive data system that will encompass data about students from prekindergarten through elementary and secondary education, higher education, and the workforce.

The system, called a Statewide Longitudinal Data System, will enable policymakers and other stakeholders to analyze data from across the entire education spectrum. This data will inform policymakers and guide them as they make decisions regarding policies and operations at all levels of education and workforce development.

“For many years, our data about Rhode Island students has been scattered among several state agencies, so we have never had a clear, unified picture of the progress our students make as they move from elementary school to higher education and on into the workforce,” said Governor Lincoln D. Chafee. “This new system will unify our several current databases and will allow educators and others to use data to make wise decisions that will improve instruction and prepare our students for success. Receiving this grant is a major milestone in our efforts to ensure the future well-being of our students and the economic prosperity of our state.”

The R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) is the lead partner on the initiative, working along with the Department of Labor and Training, the Office of Higher Education, and the R.I. Higher Education Assistance Authority (RIHEAA). The Providence Plan, a nonprofit corporation that provides data and analysis for government agencies and community groups, will oversee the development of the system.

“We are pleased that the U.S. Department of Education has once again recognized that Rhode Island is ready to lead the way toward reform of public education,” said George D. Caruolo, Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “This grant will enable us to build on the foundation that is already in place to create a robust, integrated data system that will become a great resource for Rhode Island policymakers, educators, families, and community members.”

“One of our priorities as we work together to transform education in Rhode Island is to ensure that we have user-friendly, comprehensive data systems that link across state agencies and that integrate education, demographic, and human-services data for all students,” said Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist. “This new data system that we will develop in partnership with

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Higher Education and the Department of Labor and Training will help us ensure that our graduates are ready for success in college and in challenging careers in the Rhode Island workforce.”

Charles J. Fogarty, the director of the Department of Labor and Training, said: “The ability to link education and training to employment outcomes will help the Rhode Island Workforce Development System design more effective programs that lead to better career opportunities for our citizens.”

“This new grant provides an important opportunity for our state to continue the work through the state’s dataHUB to organize and analyze disparate data so that we may provide more seamless education and career-preparation coordination for our students,” said Ray M. Di Pasquale, Commissioner of Higher Education. “We are grateful to the Governor and our sister agencies for the strong partnership that has developed.”

“This is an investment in the future of our students and our state that will yield substantial dividends for years to come,” said Charles P. Kelley, Interim Coordinating Officer for the Higher Education Assistance Authority.

“Rhode Island has made major strides in connecting the information collected across our state agencies. This grant will allow us to expand these efforts and ensure that data is both accessible and actionable,” said Patrick McGuigan, Executive Director of The Providence Plan. “We are committed to creating user-friendly tools that enable all of us to act on the crucial issues facing the long-term success and well-being of children in our state.”

The grant announced, which the U.S. Department of Education announced last Friday (June 15), will provide resources for development, training, and support that will allow Rhode Island to create a single, integrated data system for all levels of schooling (prekindergarten through college, or “grade 20,” and including adult education) and entry into the workforce - sometimes called a P-20W system. Governor Chafee will name a P-20W Council to manage the governance of the Longitudinal Data System project.

The partners in the grant have agreed to explore opportunities to expand the partnership to include other agencies in Rhode Island.

With support from an earlier Longitudinal Data System grant that RIDE received three years ago, RIDE has developed a data warehouse that houses all education data on students from kindergarten through grade 12. RIDE has also developed several systems for reporting data to the public, including InfoWorks Live!, SurveyWorks!, and the Rhode Island DataHUB.

Rhode Island has already taken initial steps toward linking student data across state agencies, including a recent data-sharing agreement between RIDE and Higher Education, the development of the WaytogoRI website housed at RIHEAA, and pilot projects linking postsecondary-education data and workforce data. In addition, the federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant that Rhode Island received last year includes resources to develop an early-childhood data system.

For more information about the Longitudinal Data System grant, see:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/DataWorks/SLDS.aspx>

For information from the U.S. Department of Education on the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grants, see:

<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds>.

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